

MARVEL

66

WAID
BUCKINGHAM
MIKI

FANTASTIC FOUR

**...BIG
STUFF
PART 2 OF 2**



Rock!
ISANOVE

THE FANTASTIC FOUR

1 A team—and a family—of adventurers, explorers and imaginauts, the Fantastic Four lead lives both ordinary—and extraordinary. As of today:

2 Reed has temporarily reduced Ben's size by half so they can search for an "alien cockroach" inside the walls and ductwork of their headquarters.

3 Johnny—entrusted by his sister with the financial operations of FF Inc., the team's licensing and revenue arm—set up a secret sting to take down two unethical co-workers, Ethan and Christi. Johnny pretended to sell the trade secret behind the ultra-adaptable "unstable molecules" used in the FF's trademark uniforms and personal effects...



4 ...including Johnny's wallet, stolen by Ethan and Christi's accomplice for study in hopes of "reverse engineering" its atomic construction. And when its molecules were illegally tampered with, a deadly chain reaction began spreading...fast.



MARK WAID
writer
MARK BUCKINGHAM
penciler
DANNY MIKI
& ALLEN MARTINEZ
inkers
AVALON'S MARK MILLA
colorist
RICHARD STARKINGS
& COMICRAFT'S ALBERT
lettering
MIKE WIERINGO & RICHARD ISANOVE
cover art
MARC SUMERAK
& ANDY SCHMIDT
assistant editors
TOM BREVOORT
editor
JOE QUESADA
editor in chief
BILL JEMAS
president
STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY
the best stuff

STAN LEE PRESENTS

...BIG STUFF

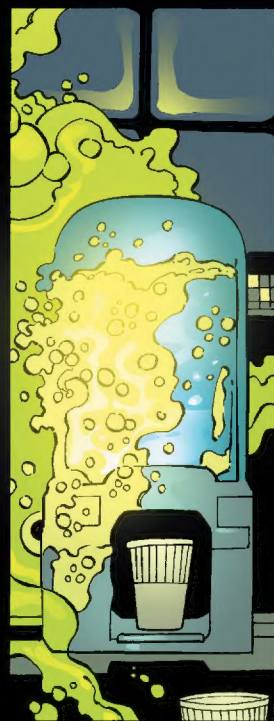
**PART
2 of 2**



Everything...
everything's
melting...!

More like
transforming. Adapting,
molecule by molecule, to
neighboring substances
like a wave and great,
now I sound like
Reed...

How do
you stop
it?



I don't
sound *that* much
like Reed. I...don't
think you *do*
stop it.

But you
sure as hell get
out of its way.
C'mon!



That
man --!

He's already
gone, Jian! We
have to help those
we can!



Open the door! *Open the door!*

It's warping shut!



Stand back! Comin' through! *Vamamos!*

You can run, too, Suarti -- but I'll *find* you. Consider it a *promise*.



The entire building...!

Don't I wish.



What's that supposed to mean?

If *only* the entire building. But *all* molecules touch *other* molecules. Dominoes will just keep falling. There's no *range limit* to the reaction.

If you've got any *real estate* in Jersey, it's about to become a *liquid asset*. Let's go!



Ben,
fight!

I'm tryin',
Stretchol! Got no
leverage! Leggo
a' me, y'
cockroach...!

...can't...
push 'im
off...

There!

It's an alien
life-form, Ben --
no doubt confused
and frightened!
All it wants
is to return to its
home dimension!
I'd prefer we not
hurt it --



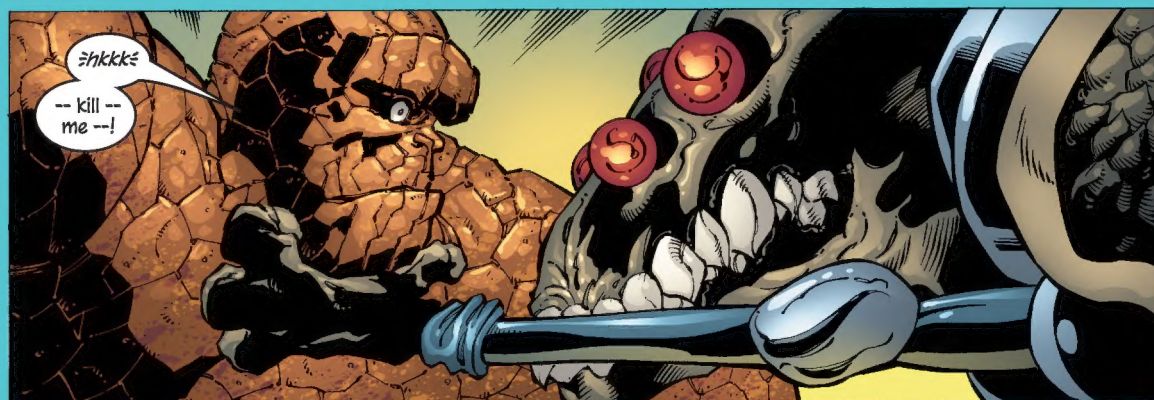
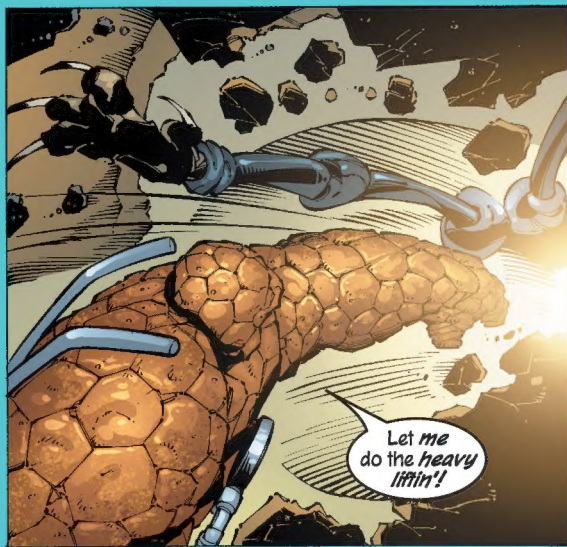
AAAGGH!

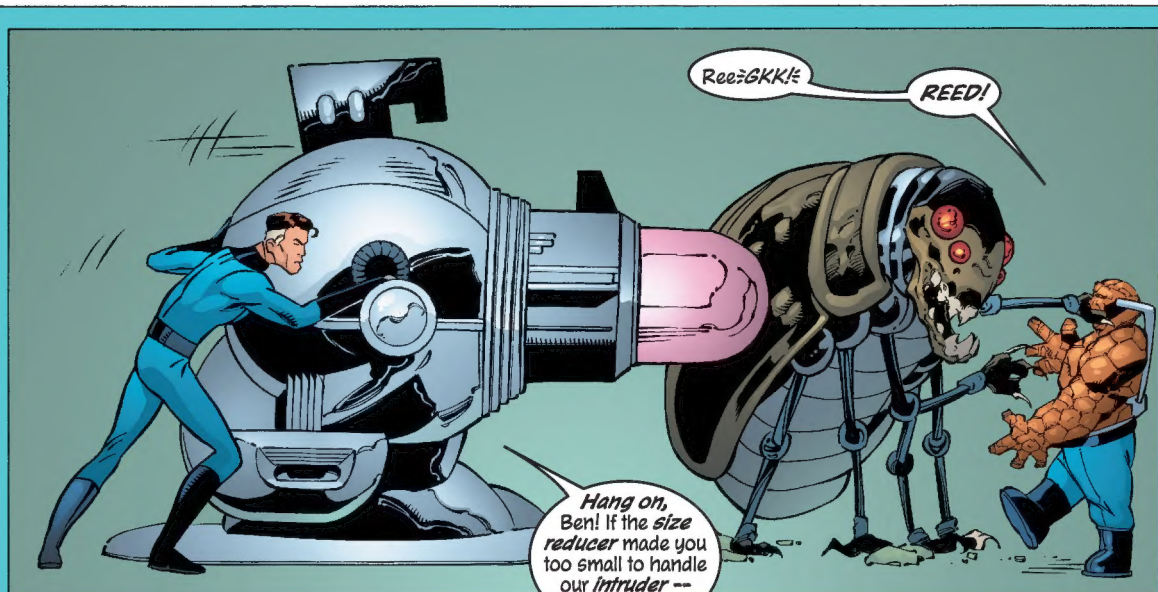
You wuz sayin'?

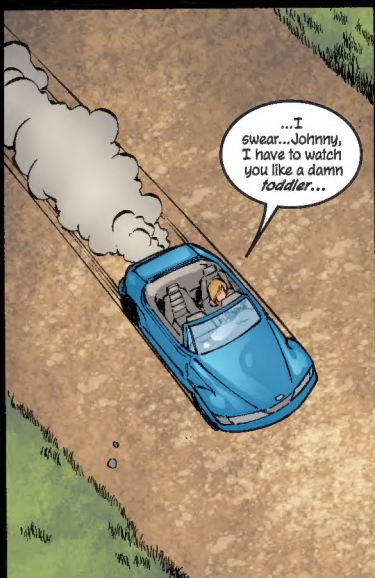
I ouché

I said I preferred we not hurt it.

I don't always get what I want.







...I swear...Johnny, I have to watch you like a damn toddler...



...cannot fathom what goes through that thing you call a head...



≡whoof!≡

!
Jian?



Sue! *There* you are. Ethan and Christi *said* you were on your way to *meet* us.

There *you* are! You just wait until I pull *over*, Jonathan Spencer Storm! You and I have a *lot* to --

-- worry about! *Unbuckle*, please. Jian --



-- take the wheel.

What?

Johnny!



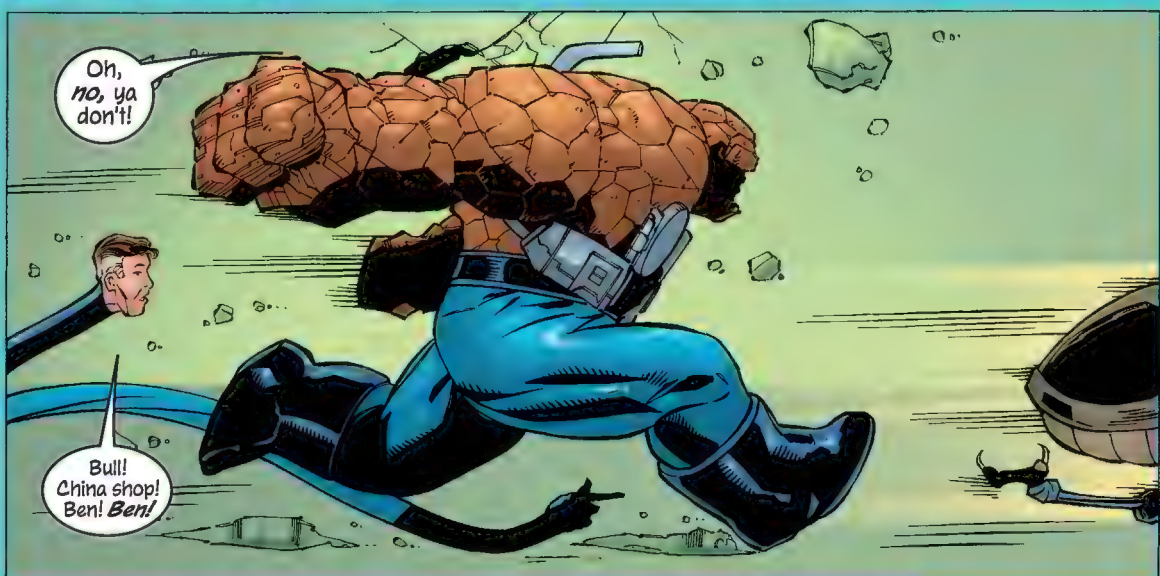
She'll be fine. She's an excellent driver.

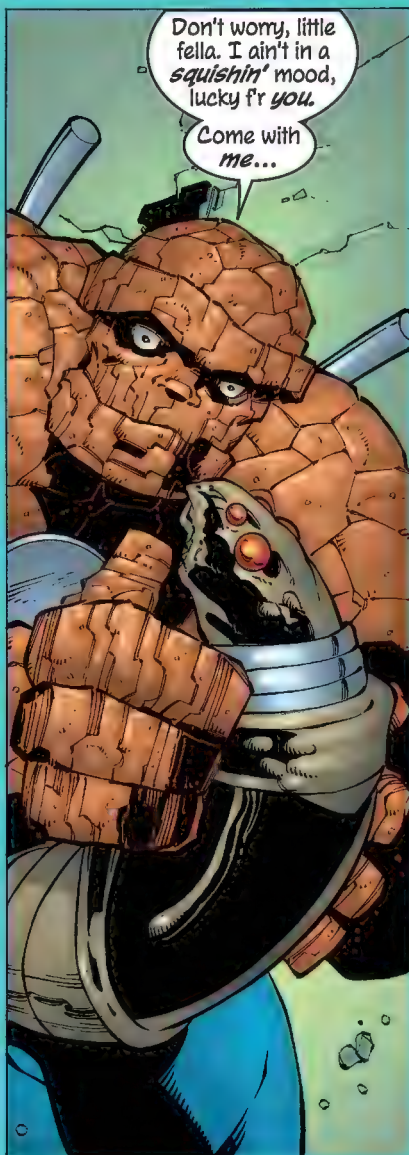
This way! We have a *problem* -- and the way I figure it, *you're* the solution!

Oh, God...!

SKREE
SKREE
SKREEEEE







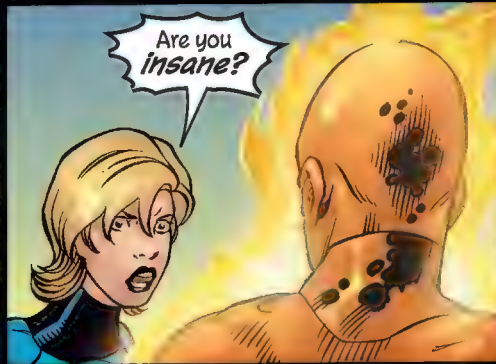
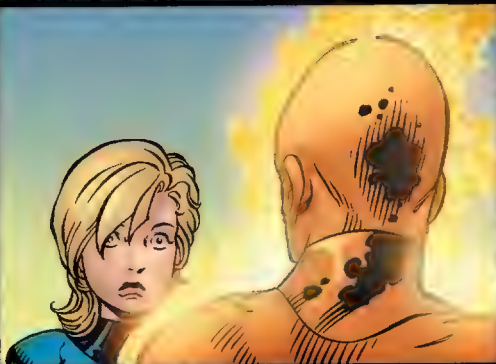
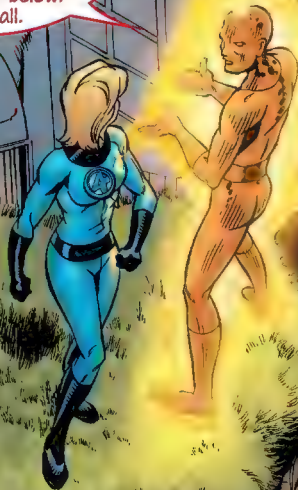
...annnnnnnd
that's how it all went
haywire... and from the
looks of it, the wider the
chain reaction scatters,
the faster it goes.

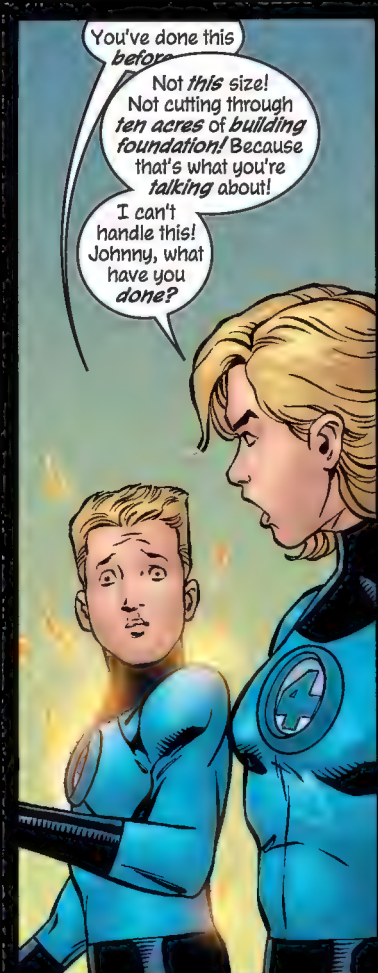
So it spreads
through *matter contact*,
right?

Well, your
force-fields are *pure*
energy. So, if we use one
to seal the area *totally*, the
reaction -- with nowhere
to go -- maybe turns in
on itself.

With any luck,
the molecules'll start
adapting to each *other*...
cancel out, go *inert*. Danger
neutralized. But, again,
only inside a *sealed*
system.

So what we
need is for you to make
a field big enough to bubble
the *entire building* above
ground *and* below.
That's all.

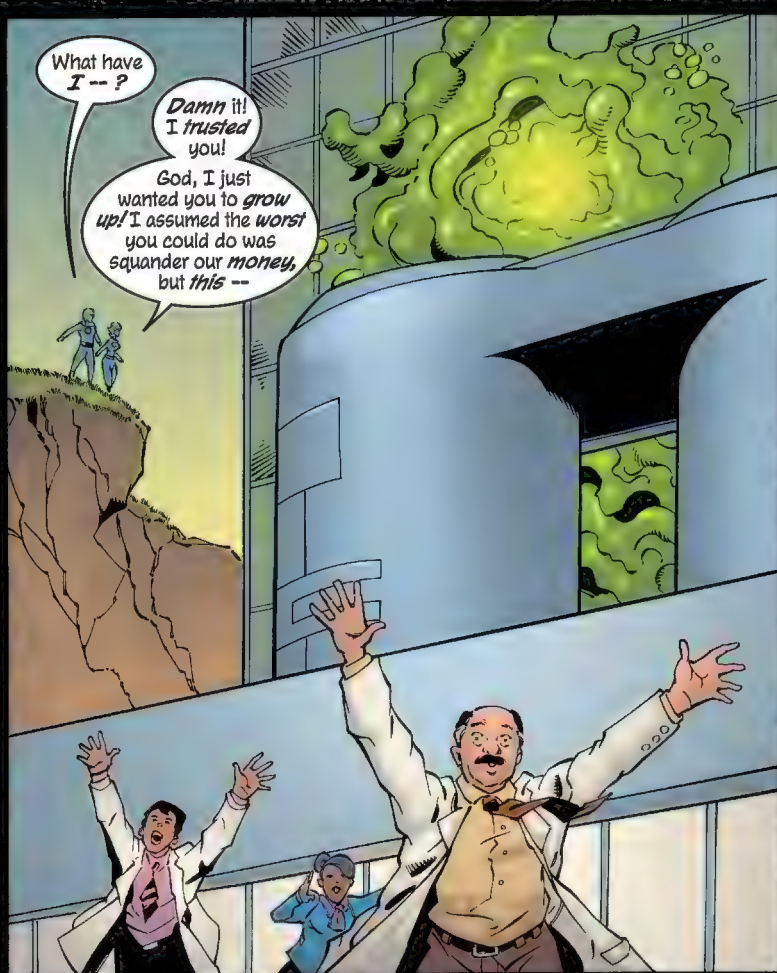




You've done this before

Not *this* size!
Not cutting through
ten acres of building
foundation! Because
that's what you're
talking about!

I can't
handle this!
Johnny, what
have you
done?



What have
I -- ?

Damn it!
I trusted
you!

God, I just
wanted you to *grow
up*! I assumed the *worst*
you could do was
squander our *money*,
but *this* --

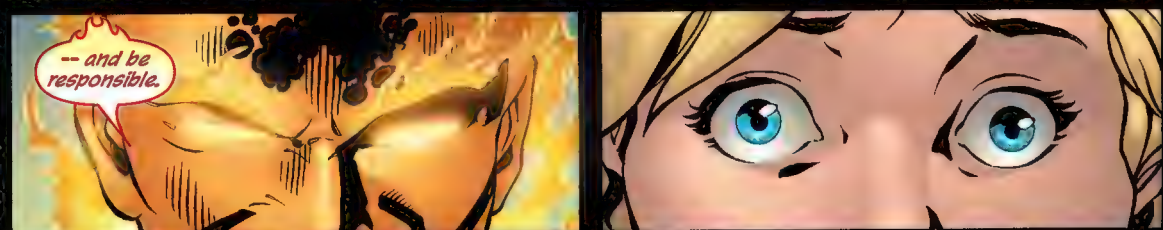
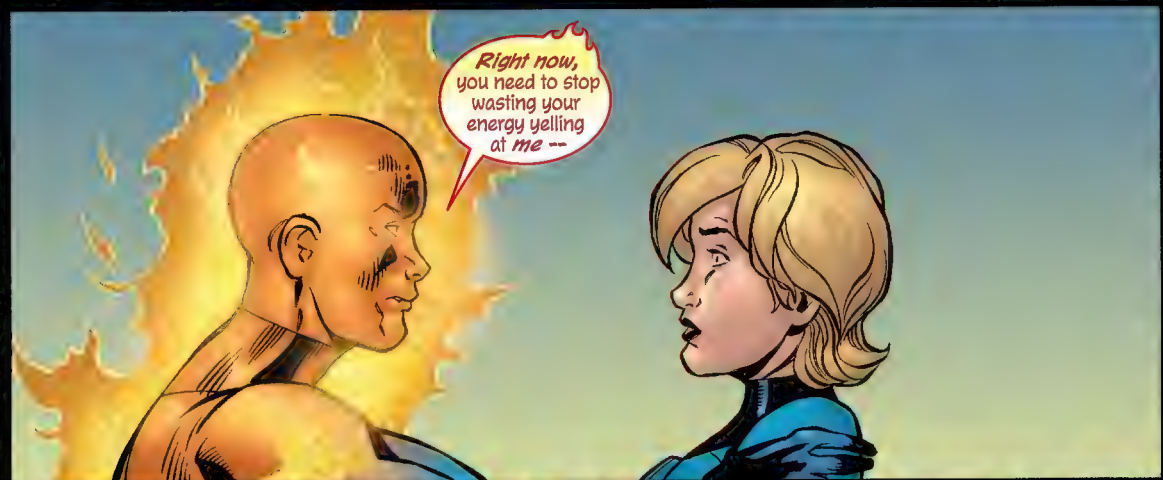


Sue, I *told*
you? On the way
over? That it was all a
set-up to bag Ethan
and Chr

So, as *usual*,
you got in *over*
your head!



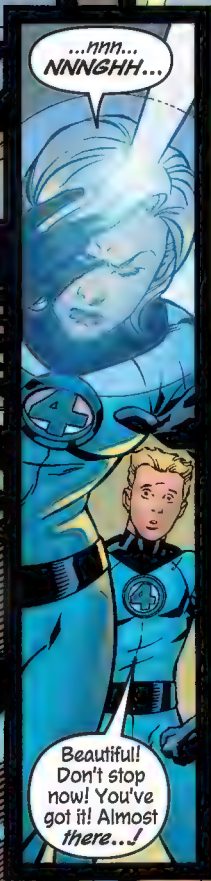
You *put* me
there.





"...it just has to form an energy seal."

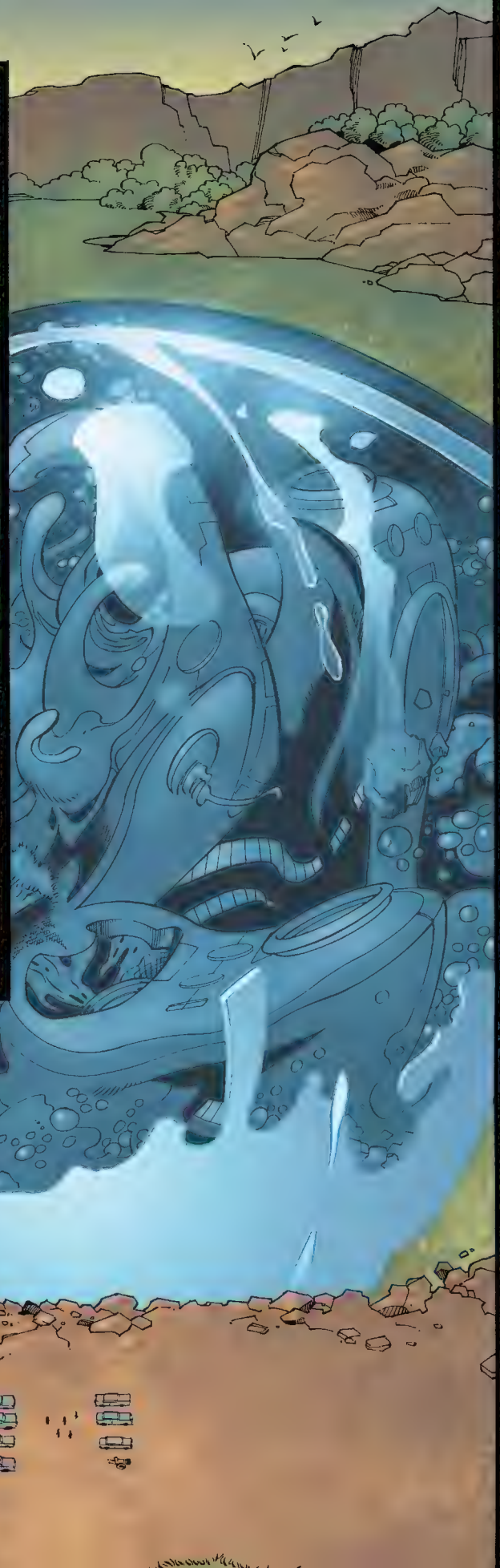




...mmm...
NNNGHH...

Beautiful!
Don't stop
now! You've
got it! Almost
there...!

Great!
now hold
it...





It...
worked. Oh...
my God...

Can I...
have an easier
job... next time?
Like, say...
giving birth?



You can have
whatever you like, sis. I'll
call Reed to come clean up, then
go turn the guy who was behind
this over to the authorities.
You collapse.

Love
you.



-- and **stay** there!

'kay, Stretcho -- close th' portal!

That's that! Now, let's get me back to *normal* size.

No time! Just got a call from Johnny! I have to go undo some damage, and quickly!



But --

When I get back! Just relax!



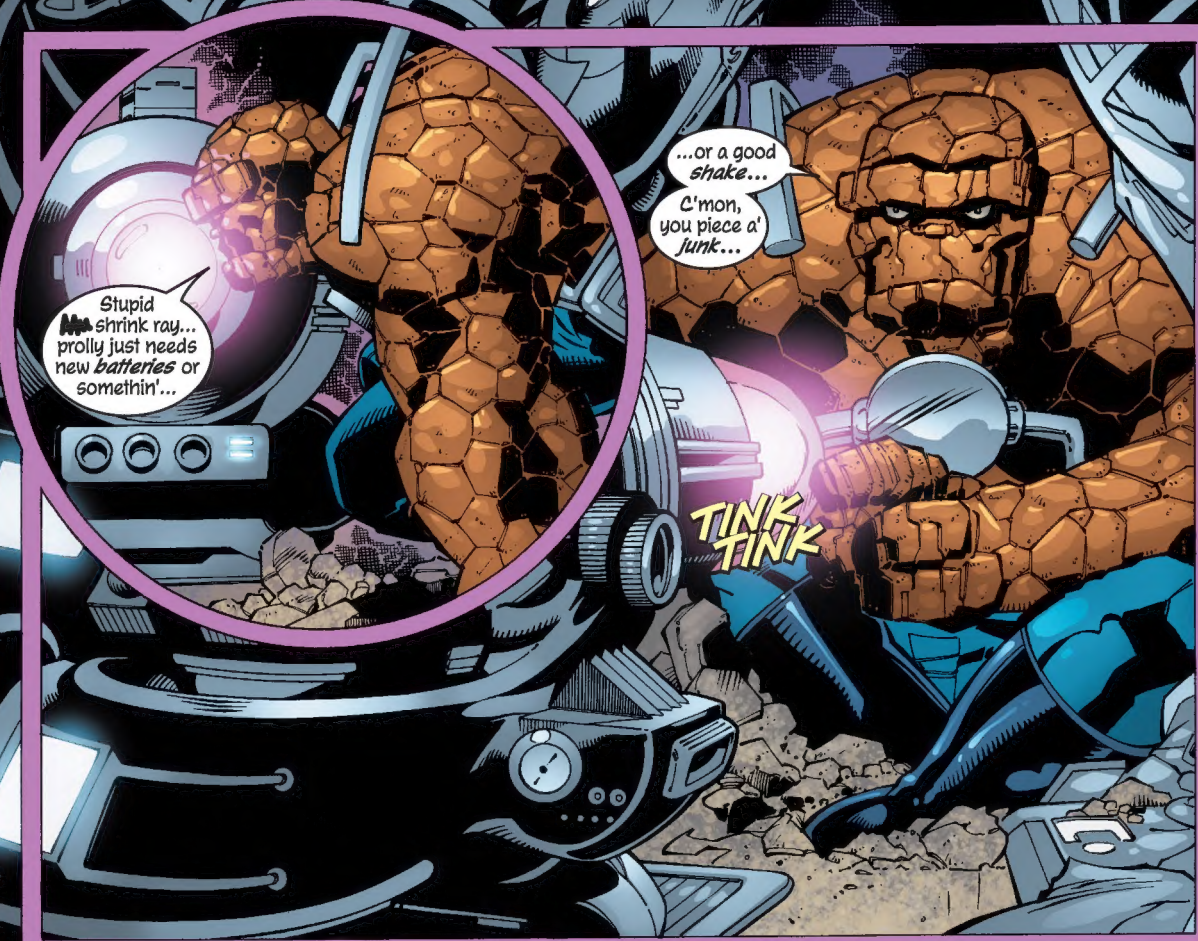
Easy f'r *you* 't say. What'm I supposed ta do inna meantime?

Uh-oh.



Can't even *siddown* on nothin'.

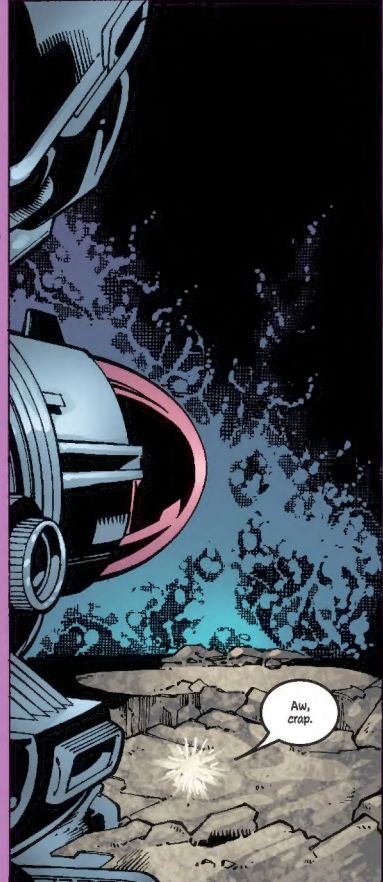
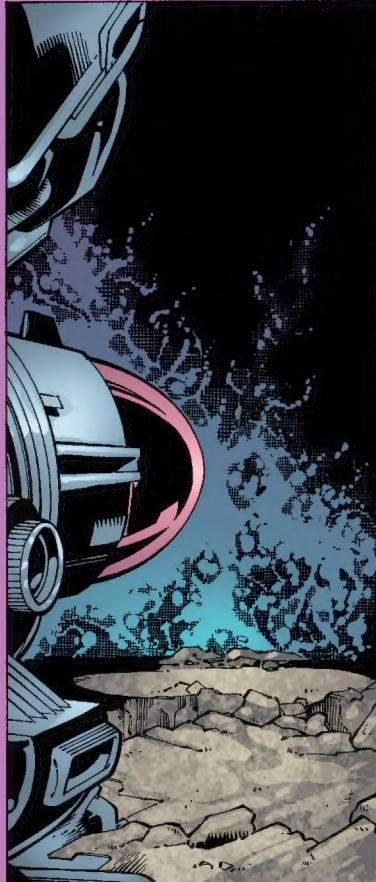
Oops.



Stupid
~~the~~ shrink ray...
prolly just needs
new *batteries* or
somethin'...

...or a good
shake...
C'mon,
you piece a'
junk...

**TINK
TINK**



Aw,
crap.

40

One week (and one stabilized office park) later...

Job Search.com

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Small business, large responsibilities. Oversee licensing, patent revenue, cash flow. Provide business leadership. Degree required. EOE. Send resume to: Baxter Building, 42nd St, NYC, 10017

...say you're calling for a job reference on Ethan Crane and Christi Stoger? You're kidding, right? Have you tried asking Jacob Suarti? I think he's allowed one phone call. No, no... let's just say they were let go with *extreme* cause and leave it at that. Good day.

Lord, look at the resumes...

Where'd this come from...?

FF, Inc.
Comprehensive
Financial Plan
2003-2004

Huh.

Good, isn't it?

This is yours?

Ours. Your brother's got some interesting ideas, Mrs. Richards. And, despite a lot to learn, a knack for numbers.

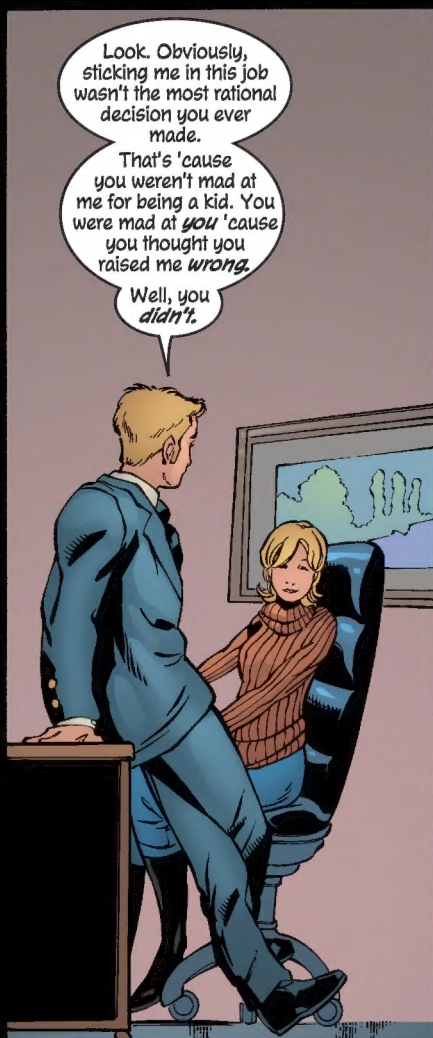
Much of that is his. We've found we make a good team.

Listen to her, Sue. Did you know Jian has a Master's in Biz-Admin?

It came up when I hired her, yes.

Oh.

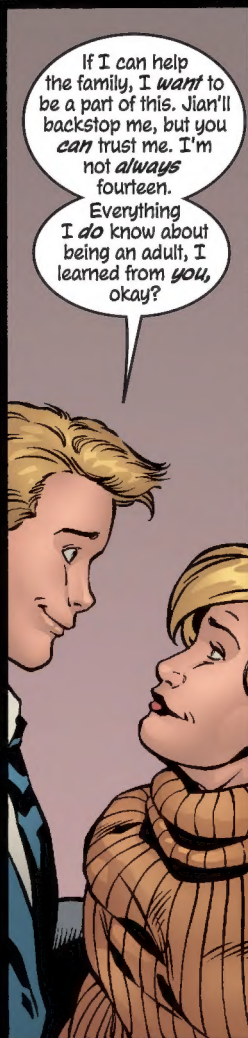
So this is an *application*? The two of you want to essentially run the business? Jian, I should have promoted you long ago, but... well... *Johnny*...



Look. Obviously, sticking me in this job wasn't the most rational decision you ever made.

That's 'cause you weren't mad at me for being a kid. You were mad at *you* 'cause you thought you raised me *wrong*.

Well, you *didn't*.



If I can help the family, I *want* to be a part of this. Jian'll backstop me, but you *can* trust me. I'm not *always* fourteen.

Everything I *do* know about being an adult, I learned from *you*, okay?



... Office responsibilities are yours. *Provisionally*. I want to fine-tooth this *plan* before I make it permanent. Jian, we'll discuss your raise in the morning.



In the meantime, control of the checkbook goes to *you* two... which means, Johnny, there's one *huge* perk in it for *you*, and here it is. Enjoy.

Hello?

Suzie, it's Ben.



Lissen, I know things're a mess down there now that we let a coupla beanccounters go, but I'm a little shorta dough this month.



Who do I gotta talk to now I get an advance on my allowance?

END

4 THOUGHTS

Hello, Fantastic Fans! It's time for another intriguing installment of **4-Thoughts**, your inside scoop on all things FF!

Today we're shooting the breeze about our "Sentient" story...and some other nifty FF tidbits as well (including one BIG announcement)!

So away we go:

Fantastic Ones,

"Some lightshow in a—a MATH SUIT—set up an explosion..."

—the frantic FF, Inc. CEO, Johnny Storm, from FANTASTIC FOUR #63.

Did he say "a MATH SUIT"?! Whoa! Did you guys ever find a way to tap into the decades-dormant fear center of this confirmed "math-a-phobe"? As a walking, talking EXPRESSION, Modulus is the scariest thing I've seen in comics for quite some time!

Tenth grade flashbacks notwithstanding, the painless bit of education received from Reed, enlightening us on the difference between an expression and an equation, was appreciated.

Indeed, it's comforting to know that the "incomplete" Modulus will never be calling on the Fantastic Four's "fantastic three", Waid, Wieringo, and Kesel—because they are clearly "without equal"!

Joe Torcivia
Westbury, NY

Happy to hear we freaked ya out nice and good, Joe! And I'm with you, man! I still quake in fear all these years after Mr. Quay's geometry class!

FF is all about exploration and imagination—cool new concepts and scientific breakthroughs. Glad to hear this one broke through to you!

FANTASTIC FOUR people,

If there has ever been a title that needed to be "Ultimatized" it is this one. Now that you have a great team on this book, forget continuing it. Get Waid and Wieringo on an "Ultimate Fantastic Four" ASAP!!!

This title has been nothing until these guys got here—not that the other team wasn't good, but this book has needed an overhaul for soooooo long it isn't funny.

FANTASTIC FOUR used to be one of the spearhead books of Marvel. Now it isn't even close to that anymore. But now that the right team is on it, this is the perfect time to "Ultimatize" this book.

I know sales went up on this when Waid and Wieringo came on, but they would go up more if this were "Ultimatized."

I am not for or against the "Ultimatizing" of the Marvel Universe, but to get this book back to its

once legendary stature, "Ultimatizing" it is the best marketing strategy to get this book back to where it belongs.

And if you don't do that, at least keep this team on the FF book now! They do know how to deliver!!

Craig Johnson
(via e-mail)

No plans for this book to relaunch as **ULTIMATE FF** anytime soon, Craig. Mark and Mike are staying right here in the midst of Marvel's First Family.

Why? Quite simple! This IS the "Ultimate" FF. Even is the title doesn't come right out and say so.

Glad to see that you seem to agree.

Dear 4-Thoughts,

Well, how will Sue's plan turn out? Will Johnny grow up and assume the responsibilities Sue has given him? He has never let the team down in battle. But will he be able to win a financial battle? Johnny has the ability to make decisions of life and death under pressure. So he should have no problem handling a little money. If Sue has confidence in him so do I.

What is that creature that loves Reed? All those symbols covering him look like scientific equations. Could this be Reed's theories come to life? If so, how can Reed defeat his own ideas? Can he? He's Reed Richards—Mr. Fantastic—he can do anything!

Richard Vasseur
London, Ontario
Canada

Now you know how Johnny's little financial adventure turned out, Richard. But trust me, Mr. Storm's days as a company man are far from over! Just wait 'til you see what he pulls in issue #68! It's already got me giggling...but Ben, not so much!

As for that "creature"...well hopefully all has been explained! And Reed pulled through once again, as he always does...doesn't he?

Mark? Why are you laughing like that, Mark?!!?

FANTASTIC FOUR,

Just read issue #63. Oh my God. More please.
Kevin Peterson
Lakewood, CO

More you say? You really want more? Well, we've got more, Kevin. We've got plenty more... Which brings me to our next note:

It's with pride in our hearts that we unveil to you, our dear readers, the newest title in the FF family! After years of sizzling action in this series, it's finally time for young master Johnny Storm to burn up the shelves on his own!

That's right: **HUMAN TORCH #1** blazes into stores in April! This new ongoing series will be written by Karl Kesel with art by Skottie Young and Joe Seung...a team that's sure to set the comics world on fire!

HUMAN TORCH #1



But no worries to all you FF faithfuls: we're not about to replace him on the roster with Wyatt Wingfoot! Our pal Johnny will still be heating up the pages of FANTASTIC FOUR every month, too! Looks like there's gonna be a heatwave this spring! Don't miss a moment of it!

Marc Sumerak
En Fuego

NEXT ISSUE:



THE FF'S MOST FEARSOME FOE RETURNS...
IN A WAY YOU'LL NEVER EXPECT...
"UNTHINKABLE"
PART 1, BY WAID, WIERINGO & KESEL.



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